Martinsville is first opponent

Raiders set for regional tourney

The Raider varsity basketball team will square off against defending Region III Champion Martinsville in the first round of the 1984 regional tournament Thursday night at 8:30 in the Rustburg gymnasium.

This is the second consecutive year Appomattox has qualified for the Region III tournament. Last year, the Raiders made it to the regional finals, where they lost to Martinsville, 61-49.

The Raiders reached the regional tournament this year by virtue of their second-place finish in the Seminole District tournament.

Appomattox lost a cliffhanger to Gretna, 55-53, in the finals of the Seminole District tournament Saturday night. Since Gretna also won the Seminole District's regular-season championship, the Raiders will advance to the regional tournament because of their finish in the district tourney.

The Raiders began the district tournament, seeded third, with a 51-47 win over Buckingham, a team that had defeated Appomattox twice during the regular season.

The Raiders had a relatively easy contest with the Knights this time around, leading 22-16 at the half, and staying out in front of Buckingham through most of the game.

Tyrone Abbitt was high scorer against Buckingham, with 13 points, and Ricky Miller and Mike Jackson each scored eight points. Others scoring for Appomattox were Tim Austin and Gary Ferguson with seven points each; Bobby Carter with four points; Todd Scruggs with three points; and Kinkle Robinson with one point.

High scorers for Buckingham were Marvin Walters, with 16 points and Will Gowin with nine.

In one of their best outings of the season, the Raiders won the semifinal round of the tournament on Friday night, 69-54, over Jefferson Forest.

Four members of the Appomattox team scored in double figures, with Gary Ferguson garnering 19 points, Mike Jackson 16, Ricky Miller 13, and Bobby Carter, 10. Tim Austin (five points), Tyrone Abbitt (four points) and Todd Scruggs (two points) also scored for the Raiders.

Appomattox took a lead early in the first quarter and was never seriously threatened throughout the game.

High scorers for Jefferson Forest were Jackie Lee, with 15 points, and Lo Davis, with 17 points.

In the tournament final round Saturday night against Gretna, the Raiders did something which has not been done to the Hawks this season; and, indeed, is rare in basketball; Appomattox held Gretna scoreless in the first quarter.

The Raiders led 12-0 at the end of the first quarter. But in the second quarter, Gretna stormed back, and had narrowed the Appomattox margin to 25-20 at the end of the first half.

The teams battled throughout the third quarter, and when the buzzer ending that period sounded, the

[Continued on page 9]

Times-Virginian

SPORTS

Basketball star at Roanoke

Abernathy has no regrets about choice

Editor's Note: The following article appeared in the Feb. 24 issue of the Roanoke Times and World News, and is reprinted here with the permission of that newspaper.

By BOB TEITLEBAUM

If it hadn't been for his love of basketball, Shane Abernathy might be preparing for spring football practice and a career in the pros.

Instead, he's Roanoke College's starting center, a key element in that college's Old Dominion Athletic Conference regular season and tournament championships.

Abernathy gave up football after his sophomore year at Appomattox County High School despite warnings from his coach that he would be better off on the field than on the court.

"Stuart Justus (Appomattox football coach at the time) said if I got on a weight program, I could play Division I," recalls Abernathy, the Maroons' 6-foot-7 junior. "I was 6-3½ and growing. But I had started playing basketball. I liked it more."

Justus, now the coach at Garden High in Oakwood, was upset about Abernathy's decision. "I never did tell him that, though," said Justus. He just felt like he wanted to play basketball exclusively. He had played defensive tackle for me and we went to the playoffs. He probably weighed 185-200 pounds.

"There's no doubt with his quickness and size, he could play Division I. I told him this....He could have played for Tech, Virginia, Kentucky, wherever. There are a couple of tackles that went to Liberty Baptist from Garden and he was much better than either one of them."

Justus says Abernathy has quick feet, that he moved across the line well. It's these same quick feet that make Abernathy the ODAC's most consistent big man. At his height, though, playing center in Division I basketball would have been next to impossible.

"I told him," says Justus, "'You're not a big-time basketball player. Like it or not, you're a football player.'"

Abernathy, though, has no regrets about choosing basketball or coming to Roanoke over Bridgewater and Lynchburg, where coaches told him he could play right away. Slowed by a back injury as a freshman, he didn't show his potential as a Division III player until last year on a Roanoke team which finished third in the nation.

"My cousin asked if I regretted my decision," said Abernathy. "I said, 'No, it (Roanoke) was a once-in-a-lifetime chance to play in a system that's so productive.'

"No matter how it turns out, I won't regret it. It would be great to win it all (before I graduate), but look at the record (82-7) since I've been here. Because I played for only one winning team in high school (12-8), that's made it worthwhile."

There is another side to the Abernathy story -- his parents Cloud and Jean. The are at 80 percent of Roanoke's games, traveling to Washington and other stops on the annual ODAC tour.

"My dad was upset with me when I quit football," he says, recalling a tough time. "My older brothers had played and we had always played since Little League."

That didn't last long. Abernathy glows when his parents walk into the gym. At Washington and Lee this year, Shane took time from pre-game warmups when his parents came to the door of the gym to see that they were admitted.

"They're proud of me. I know the sacrifice they're making to come to games. It makes me proud because I know they're behind me," he said.

In tight games, the player and his mother also have a signal. "She'll have her fists clinched tightly. She's nervous. But she'll give me a wink or a smile (breaking the tension)," said Shane.

If Abernathy gave up on football, he has made himself into the best basketball player possible.

"I used to sweep snow off the church parking lot (where he stayed for hours shooting basketball). They had this 10-foot bank at one end and when the ball went over it, we'd have to chase it," he said.

"All the people in Appomattox knew me. They'd see me out on the court, stop by and talk to me."

He came to Roanoke after Maroon coach Ed Green waged a strong recruiting battle. Green even called Abernathy long distance before his team's 1981 NCAA game in New Jersey. Most coaches would have been thinking about the game, but Green was looking ahead and how Abernathy could help.

"I went to basketball camp at Roanoke after my junior year (in high school)," said Abernathy. "I was impressed with coach Green. His charisma. He's overly enthusiastic about anything or nothing.

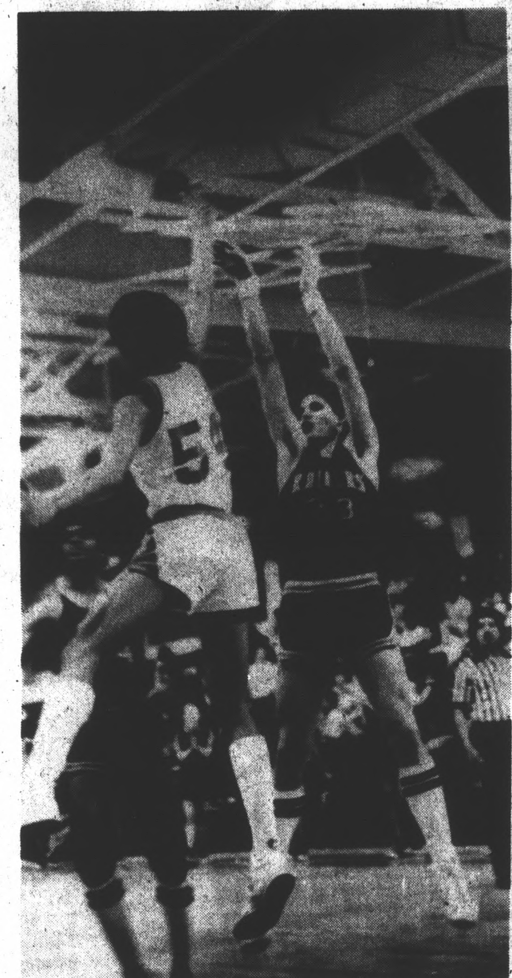
"Starting that summer, I got two letters a week and pictures of the new gym (Bast Center). Coach Green told me about (Kenny) Belton and other inside players being seniors. He came to see me two or three times and so did (Roanoke assistant) Coach (Tic) Price."

Abernathy was eliminated late by Richmond, where he would have gone had the Spiders offered him a scholarship. Abernathy rebuffed VMI's interests because of the military rules. So he chose Roanoke.

"As a freshman, he knew what he had to do," said Green. "Improve his game speed, agility and get a higher release on his shot."

So if Abernathy can't play football, what's after college? "He's given some indication he may want to coach," said Green. "I tell him he's nuts. But he has a keen insight."

"I think he'll be a good one," said Justus. "He loves the game so much."



SHANE ABERNATHY number 33, goes up for a shot when he played for the Appomatox raiders. Abernathy is now the center for the Roanoke College Maroons, who this year won the Old Dominion Athletic Conference regular-season and tournament championships.

Three cited in All-District team voting

Ricky Miller and Gary Ferguson, seniors on the Appomattox County High School basketball team, have been selected to the All-Seminole District basketball team for 1984.

In addition, Bobby Carter of Appomattox received honorable mention in the voting for the all-district team, which was released this week by the district headquarters.

Miller, a senior center, is the leading scorer on the Raider team this year, having scored 12.5 points per game average, and recorded 11.5 rebounds per game, average.

Ferguson, a senior guard has averaged 6.7 points per game this season.

Other members of the all-district team this year include Ramsey Yeatts and Qmon King of Gretna; Eric Scott of Rustburg; Frankie West of Altavista; Will Gowin of Buckingham; Jon Brown of Liberty; Ricky Otey of Jefferson Forest; and Horace Spencer of Nelson County.

Ramsey Yeatts of Gretna was elected the district's best player for 1984, Bob Locust of Gretna was named the district's best coach.

Shupe, Hancock honored

Kim Shupe and Kim Hancock, of Appomattox, have been named to the second team All Seminole District Volleyball squad, according to a release from district headquarters.

Shupe and Hancock, both seniors, earned a spot on the all-star squad at the "hitter" position.

Sally Coleman, a junior at Appomattox, received honorable mention in voting for this year's all-star volleyball team. Her position on the district squad was also "hitter".

Jefferson Forest and Altavista dominated the first-team All-District squad. Dina Thomas, Kristie Spence and Susan Mears of Jefferson Forest, were all named to the squad, and Janny Hect and Judith Walker were named to the team from Altavista.

Cary Cowlbeck of Liberty was the sixth member of the first-team all-district squad.

Coach of the year honors for volleyball went to Phyllis Buckner of Jefferson Forest, and Player of the Year honors went to Susan Mears, a senior at Jefferson Forest.

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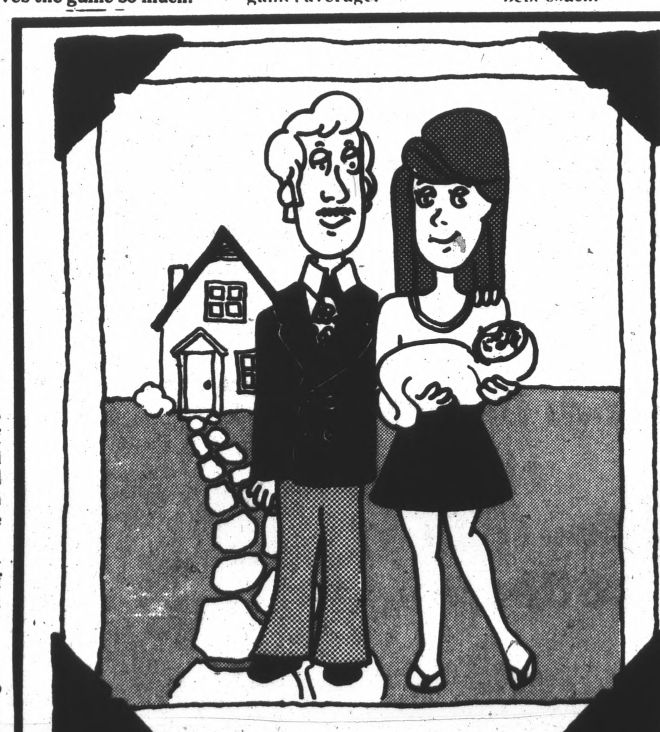

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Regional tourney set

[Continued from page 8]

Raiders had fallen behind by a point, 38-37.

The teams ran neck-and-neck during the final period of play. With time fading fast, it appeared that Gretna had iced the game, but the Raiders pulled to within two, as close as they would get before time ran out.

In the end, the Hawks pulled off the win by a two-point margin, 55-53.

"I'm very proud of the way the boys played, all through the district tournament," noted Raider Coach Coty Dickerson after the game. "We're disappointed that we didn't win it all, but I think the kids played as hard as they could all through the tournament, and they never gave up."

The coach continued, "We played a tremendous first half against Gretna. At the end of the game, we had some shots, good shots, that just wouldn't fall. In the end, against Gretna, it's like we won the battle, but they won the war."

Gary Ferguson was the high scorer against Gretna, with 27 points. Tyrone Abbitt had eight points, Ricky Miller had seven, Bobby Carter four, and Kinkle Robinson scored a point against Gretna for the Raiders.

High scorers for the Hawks were Ramsey Yeatts, with 24 points; Omon King, with 15 points and Jeff Smith with 12 points.

Speaking of this week's first-round regional contest against Martinsville, Dickerson says "We've got our hands full. Martinsville has won the Region III tournament the past five years and won the state title five times.

"They beat us in the final round of the regional tournament last year," Dickerson continues. "We respect them, but we're not afraid of them. We're looking forward to the game."

The winner of the Martinsville-Appomattox game will play Botetourt Friday night in the semifinal round of the tournament. The winner of Thursday's early game, Covington vs. Laurel Park, will play Gretna Friday night in the other semifinal game.

The final tournament game will be Saturday night. All games will be played at Rustburg.

GRETNA'S RUSSELL BERGER (No. 22) tries unsuccessfully to score in the first quarter of Saturday night's Seminole District tournament championship game. Defending is Raider Mike Jackson (no. 44) as Bobby Carter, (left) and Tim Austin (No. 14) of the Raiders, and Eddie Clark (no. 14) and Jeff Smith of Gretna look on. (Photo by Jeff Spitzer)

Writer expresses anger

Editor:

I wish to express my anger on the letter in the Times-Virginian concerning discrimination to the youth last week.

I think that the man at the mall was very rude. If the man thought that the youth was stealing a vehicle he should have called the police instead of just standing there and staring.

I also think that it wasn't right to call the youth a liar! How did he know whether or not he was lying? What business did the man have questioning the youth, that is the police's duty, not the man's.

I hope that you don't think that all teenagers are up to no good, if you do you are sadly mistaken because I myself am a teenager. I will agree with the youth how out of line his actions were. Next time his parents may be close by.

One Angry Teenager
S. [Squirrel] Ferguson

Laurant to speak to G & T

Darrell Laurent, columnist for the Lynchburg News and Daily Advance, will be guest speaker at Appomattox County High School for the Gifted and Talented Seminar Thursday, March 8.

Since school will be dismissed at 2 p.m. that afternoon, the seminar will begin at 2:05 in room 205 and end at 3 p.m. Mr. Laurant will discuss his career in journalism and informally entertain questions from students.

'Real Estate' class set

The Distributive Education Department of Appomattox County High school is offering a "Principles of Real Estate" class.

This course is designed for those persons planning to begin a career in real estate. This is approved and required by the Virginia Real Estate Commission for all persons who plan to take the Virginia Real Estate License Examination.

The instructor for the class is Mr. Stephen Jackson. The fee for this class, including the text and workbook, is $80. Advance registration and payment is required and the enrollment is limited. Class begins on Tuesday, March 13 from 7-9:30 p.m. in room 305 of the high school. The class will meet each Tuesday and Thursday night for 12 weeks.

For more information, please contact Mr. John McHale at 352-5317 or Mr. R.B. Carter at 352-8251. To register for the class, please send your check for $80 made payable to Appomattox County School Board to: Appomattox County High School, c/o Mr. John McHale, Appomattox, Va. 24522.

ACFB meeting slated

The Appomattox County Farm Bureau will hold its annual spring dinner meeting March 17 at 7 p.m. at the Appomattox County High School cafeteria. Meat and beverages will be provided by the Farm Bureau. All members are asked to bring a vegetable and salad or dessert.

A discussion of some of the important Farm Bureau resolutions which are being presented to the State Legislature will be held. Members are asked to participate by discussing issues important to the Farm Bureau and the community.

The Conservation Tillage Contest is being sponsored this year by Virginia Farm Bureau and Clark Lewis will have additional information at this meeting.

The Women's Committee is again sponsoring the Miss Appomattox County Farm Bureau Contest. Producer members having a daughter 17-22 years of age, are asked to please encourage them to take part in this event. The winner will receive cash prize of $25.00, the runner-up will receive $15.00 and third place winner will receive $10.00. Each contestant must give a brief speech from one to three minutes on agriculture. Required attire will be street clothes. Winner of this contest will appear in state contest in Norfolk this fall. For more information call Wanda Harris at 352-8973.

Terri Conrad and Perry McCraw, insurance advisors, will be present to discuss insurance needs. A new type of insurance is available to all members Multiple Peril Crop Insurance which is a new term for All-Risk Crop Insurance.

Members are reminded that kits for placing identifying numbers on farm machinery are available at the Farm Bureau Office.

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